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ABSTRACT

A study was conducted to determine the success or failure of late applicants and late registrants at Honolulu Community College (HCC) as measured by rate of completion, success in classes, etc., and to investigate ways in which the late applicant/registrant could be integrated into the mainstream of the system more easily. Avenues of recruitment were examined to determine if they could preclude some of the problems with the processing and instruction of these new students. Among the conclusions resulting from the study were the following: (1) the acceptance of late applicants/registrants appeared to be worthwhile for both the college and the student; (2) late registrants who took only one to three courses had the highest course completion rates; (3) students in vocational courses had higher rates of success than those in liberal arts courses; (4) of the 214 courses attempted by the 99 late registrants involved in the study, 152 were completed, indicating that the late registrant dropped one or two courses, but did not drop out of school; and (5) of the 144 original late applicants, 99 actually became late registrants, indicating that some students might be applying to more than one school within the system. Study findings suggested that a program providing early direction, orientation, and remediation could minimize the late application burden for both students and administrators. (EJV)

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Institutional Research: A Follow-Up Study on the Late Applicant and the Late Registrant at Honolulu Community College

A Leaders for the 80's Project

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Institutional Research
A Follow-up Study on the Late Applicant
and the Late Registrant at Honolulu Community College

A Leaders for the 80's Project
by
Barbara Bennett Peterson, PhD

The overall goal of this project was the determine the success or failure of the student who enrolls late at Honolulu Community College by measuring rate of completion, success in classes, etc., and to investigate ways in which the late applicant or registrant could be integrated into the mainstream of the system more easily. This project also sought to determine if certain avenues of recruitment would not preclude some of the problems with the processing and instruction of these new students. The activities involved in the project included the identification of the students who were late applicants and registrants, following their success through the semester, and making an analysis of the patterns which emerged from the computerized facts. The final report was submitted to the Committee on Student Affairs (COSA) for their discussion and use, as well as the administration of Honolulu Community College and the Chancellor for Community Colleges, University of Hawaii.

This analysis of late applicants and late registrants at Honolulu Community College during the Spring semester 1986 reached the following conclusions:

1) The acceptance of late applications and thereby late registrants which result appears to be worthwile for both the college and student. This is based on the fact that out of 144 late applicants, 99 became late registrants, and of these 99, only 4 dropped from school during the erase period, and only 8 dropped completely from school during the entire semester. This retention rate for late applicants who became registrants is unusually high. Hence, the argument for the continuance of the late applicant and late registrant service at Honolulu Community College.

2) The greatest success, as measured by course completion, came from those students, who as late registrants, took only 1 to 3 courses. As expected perhaps, a student coming in late has a much higher rate of successful completion when he or she has only 3 to 9 hours of credits to catch up on when they enter a course from 1 to 3 class meetings late. From the data, it appears that 12 credits is just too much for a late registrant. From the student grade reports printed out for the 99 students studied, when a student took 12 or more units as a late registrant, they almost invariably dropped at least one course or recieved an N or W or F. Late registrants should perhaps be counselled at late registration not to take more than 9 credits.

3) The rate of success rises when students enroll in a vocational program as opposed to liberal arts courses. And the rate even rises further for success when the student takes only 1 or 2 vocational courses within his selected program or major field (e.g. AMT Automotive Mechanics and Technology). Perhaps this success is assisted by a supportive peer group in the shop areas or by the vocational instructors who work with their students over long time periods (half days, 5 days a week). It is interesting to note that not a single student enrolled in a vocational course as a late registrant dropped out of school. All 8 of the late registrants who dropped out completely were in liberal arts.

4) The total number of courses attempted by the 99 late registrants were 214. Of these attempted, 152 were completed (for tabulation purposes, the I (incomplete) was tabulated as not finishing the course). The late registrant, (in summary of this data and the data in section 2), is dropping one or two courses, but is not usually dropping out of school. This information makes a positive statement about the support network at the college, the faculty, administration, and the counselling staff.

5) Looking at the 144 original late applicant total compared with the 99 who eventually became late registrants, it may be that some of these students are making an application to more than one school within the system. It may be that they are "hedging their bets" in a way and are planning to enroll at Honolulu Community College if 1) they are not accepted at Manoa, 2) the class schedule of classes looks attractive and valuable; 3) they cannot get the courses they need at another community college; 4) they are on a stand by basis to get into a vocational program at Honolulu Community College and they are admitted. (Their registration depends upon ready access to that specific program.) It would be a valuable system analysis to look into this possible overlap and the reasons for its occurrence.

Recommendations:

1) To cut down on the number of late applicants and therefore late registrants, it might be valuable to initiate

a summer "bridge" program similar to the STEP program now functioning at the University of California at Davis. STEP stands for Special Transitional Enrichment Program and is aimed at enriching first-year academic performance for new students and at retention of those same students. STEP is part of the larger program at Davis called EOP, Educational Opportunity Program. EOP is aimed at recruitment and pre-admissions advisement, admissions assistance, orientation and academic enrichment, financial aid, and academic and non-academic support services.

Students could be recruited from the high schools, possibly even during their senior year, to attend one or more STEP classes, especially in Math and English, as these areas seem to be the academic areas of greatest deficiency as evidenced by this study of late registrants.

Or STEP as a program could be initiated for late applicants and or late registrants when they first come to Honolulu Community College. At Davis, the program is aimed at low-income and minority students that may have difficulty transferringto a university level curriculum. Based on an ERIC Report number 256275 the objectives of STEP are: " 1) To assist students to strengthen their learning skills and study habits in areas where improvement is needed, 2) to enhance students' readiness to do University work by providing a week of orientation and three weeks of instruction prior to the Fall quarter, and 3) to assist

students' adjustment to the Davis campus by providing living/learning experiences in residence halls and general orientation to campus life."

Honolulu Community College could do this immediately this Spring, 1987 semester on perhaps a one day orientation basis. All "special action" or high risk students, especially the late applicants would be urged or required to attend. Our program perhaps could be called STEP UP (Special Transitional Enrichment Program, University Prep) would also act as an outreach service to the community to recruit students. STEP UP would operate during the school year too, perhaps in modules of every 8 weeks, when high school students would be invited to enroll for one day orientation perhaps on a Saturday. Applications would be accepted on an on-going basis from those students who wish to complete a STEP UP orientation session. This STEP UP service should be extended to every high school in Honolulu Community College's district. Contacts could also be made with the businesses in the community to offer STEP UP orientation sessions.

Given the current level of funding, STEP UP possibly would have to be funded initially through grants such as the Educational Improvement Fund (EIF), or through the Chancellor's Office, or through faculty donating their time free once a year to assist in running a Saturday orientation session which includes teaching college level skills.

This plan is advanced as a result of my study of the 99 late registrants at Honolulu Community College during the Spring 1986 who came out of the original pool of 144 late applicants. The problem perhaps is not one of retention, which as we have seen above is very good, but one of recruitment and early registration. This study also could be used to support early registration of all current students on campus. Early registration would flow naturally from a program such as the recommended STEP UP in which Honolulu Community College would attempt to register as many graduating seniors in high school as possible as soon as they have gone through a one day orientation session on our campus. With Kapiolani Community College's Pensacola campus being phased out over the next 3 to 5 years, it would seem natural that Honolulu Community College should attempt to move into the Downtown to Kakaako areas. Perhaps STEP UP or some other form of orientation and recruitment, should be applied to McKinley High School's student population as soon as possible.

The problem of the late applicant really may be the problem of the undecided, undirected student, who is just out of high school and undecided about career objectives. The late applicant, as evidenced by this study, is also the student who needs remediation. If the campus could administer a program such as STEP UP to that student early enough, then we would minimize for our administrators the late application burden.

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